

NEIL LIVINGSTON and JANET McNAIR

The Marriage Records of the Parochial Registers for the County of Argyll, Glassary - M 1768-1818 - 511-2 Page 32 for December 23, 1813 show "Neil Livingston in the parish of Craignish and Janet MacNair in the parish of Glasrie". The parents of this couple are: Neil Livingston, the son of Malcolm Livingston and Isabell McDougal and Janet McNair, the daughter of Neil McNair and Sarah McPhail. This marriage started a tremendous posterity. The Glasrie Parish is located near the town of Lochgilphead, Argyllshire, Scotland which is in the Highlands.



Glasrie Parish Church, Kilmichael, Scotland - 1971

The couple lived in the area until three of their daughters were born: Sarah, Mary and Margaret. There is no record of their life in Scotland so we will have to imagine what transpired. History tells us that Colonel Thomas Talbot had received a grant of 5,000 acres of land in the Township of Dunwich and Aldborough bordering on Lake Erie. He was required to settle families on 50 acres in order to be entitled to 150 acres for himself. He needed a lot of people so he apparently advertised for settlers to move to Canada. He was an Irish gentleman of good birth and when a goodly number of the Scottish Highlanders applied he wasn't too impressed because they had a reputation of being a rough people. However, he did need the manpower so in 1820 Neil and Janet joined this group and emigrated to the Talbot Settlements. From the Janet Livingston Gardner family we learn that they landed at Quebec, Canada, hurried to a hotel or inn where their fourth daughter, Janet, was born on 20 Nov 1820. Apparently they then travelled on to New Glasgow on the shores of Lake Erie to receive their 50 acre allotment on the 10th or 11th concession in Aldborough Township. In 1979 when you drive through this country it is hard to imagine what it looked like at that time because there are level fields, excellent crops growing (particularly tobacco) and only sparse little bush, or woods, at the end of each farm. However, when the Livingstons arrived the whole country was covered by trees and underbrush and this had

land. The area was designated as "Starvation Acres" by some of the descendents of these sturdy Scottish emigrants. 4

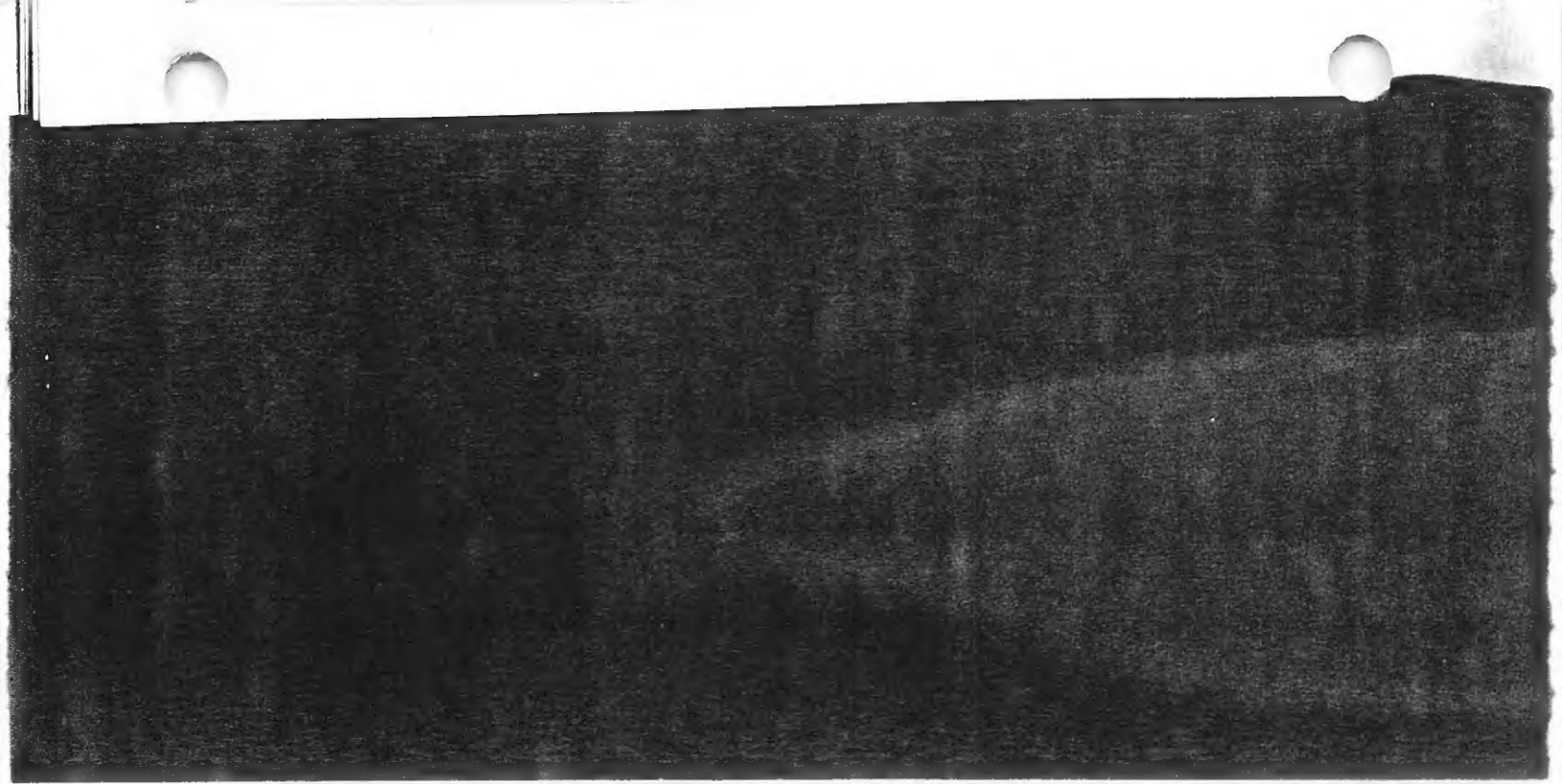
Neil and Janet had four boys born to them after arriving in Aldborough, the youngest born in 1829. Life was hard and supporting a young family of eight was difficult so Neil left his family some time between 1829 and 1832 to go to civilization to obtain work to help support his family. He was never heard from again. They didn't know whether he met with foul play, was eaten by wild animals (there were many in the woods then) or whether he just walked away from his responsibilities. The wild animal theory seems quite plausible because of the conditions which existed at that time. In reading some of the history of the settlement of Canada there were instances of humans eaten by the wild animals.

In 1832 the Highland settlers turned in their 50 acre allotments to Colonel Talbot in exchange for some more land in the Township of Mosa, farther north and west of New Glasgow. This area reminded them of their beloved Scotland because there were some hills and rivers in the area, similar to their glens. Janet settled on a wooded area where they could look down on a tributary of Bear Creek, now known as the Sydenham River. This was a nostalgic memory for many of her children and grandchildren. Little is known of their struggle to keep body and soul together but there undoubtedly were many hardships to be endured as well as happy periods.



The hill in Mosa where the Livingstons lived - taken 1971

As the children grew up they married and left home. Two of her girls, Margaret and Janet, married brothers, Archibald and William Gardner, joined the Mormon church and left for Nauvoo, Illinois. When they arrived there the people were being driven out of Illinois so they went on to Winter Quarters in Iowa and then on to settle the Salt Lake Valley in Utah Territory. The boys, Duncan, John and Neil had land in the same vicinity and farmed. Neil subsequently moved his family to Michigan in the United States. The youngest boy, Dougald, was not very well and when he was about 25 years old he went to



Chicago, Illinois with some friends hoping to get some help with his health problem. He died very suddenly on 17 May 1854 and was buried there.

All of this must have been very difficult for Janet. Her two girls left in the spring of 1846, and then Dougald, the pride of all of the family, left and died in 1854. The following is an excerpt from a letter written by Duncan Livingston, son of Neil and Janet, to Archibald Gardner in the Great Salt Lake Basin, August 31, 1854:

"Our much respected and beloved brother, Dougald, went to the lake in hopes of improving his health. At Chicago, May 16th, A.D. 1854, he ate his supper. About ten o'clock he took with severe cramps and at one o'clock the next morning, gave up his spirit to Him who gave it. Alexander McColl from Mosa along with other friends conveyed his corpse in a hearse to his grave and interred the remains with all decency.

"On Friday, June 30th, our dearly beloved mother arose at daybreak, walked out of the door, came in, sat on a chair, called twice to Neil, fainted and fell to the floor. Immediately he came to her assistance and lifted her into bed. She complained of her head and asked for a drink of water. Neil got it and sent immediately for us and sister Sarah and the nearby neighbors. A doctor was summoned who arrived without delay. He bled her. The blood ran freely but he gave very little hopes for her recovery. About 6 o'clock Saturday morning, July 1, A. D. 1854, be it forever recorded in our memories, our dearly beloved mother breathed her last. The next day, the Sabbath, with sobriety and heartbreak her remains were buried in the cemetery opposite the Scotch Free Church, Mosa Townline, in the presence of a great concourse of respectable relatives, friends and neighbors." (The tombstone marking her grave shows her death as July 4, 1854 but this must be a mistake).

Janet and Neil raised a respectable family of which they were very proud. Their descendents have proven to be worthy of that pride.

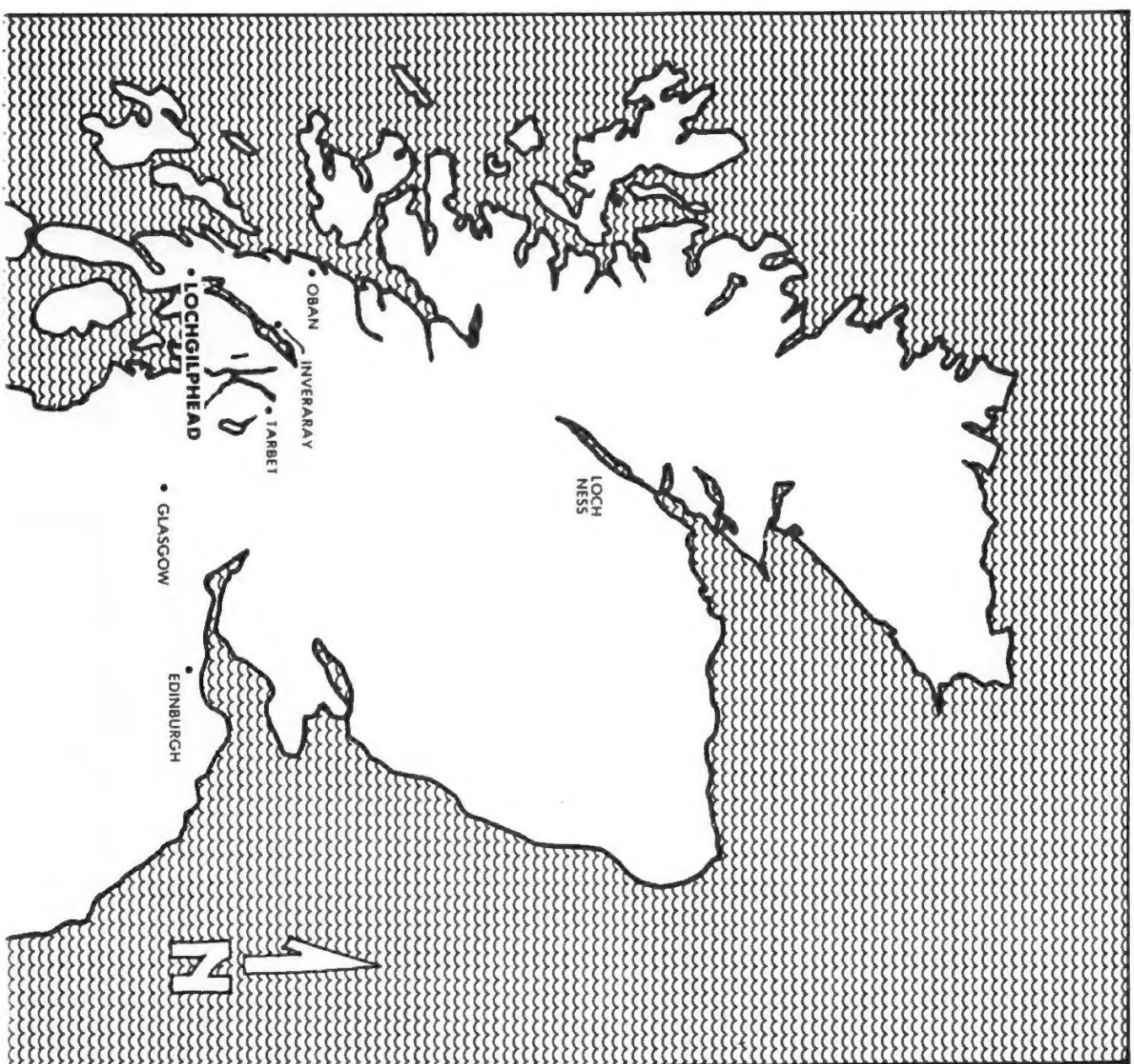
Among the Scottish emigrants who flocked to America in the first quarter of the 19th Century were Neil Livingston, his wife, Janet McNair, and three little girls, Sarah, Mary and Margaret. The latter had been born 2 years before among the Highlands of Scotland at Lochgilphead, Argyllshire, 12 Oct 1819. They came in a sailing vessel and landed at Quebec, Canada 20 Nov 1820. They hurried and found a place to stay and that night a daughter was born to them.

Neil Livingston had cut down trees, hewed logs, and built their first home there in the backwoods of Canada with his own hands. He struggled for a few years tilling the soil, but it was poor living he eked out and thinking to improve their conditions, he left to find work. He was never heard of again.

Neil Livingston and Janet McNair were the parents of 4 girls and 4 boys. Three girls were born in Scotland and the one girl and four boys were born in Canada.

---Written by Glen "R" Mitchell, third great grandson

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